ResearchGate

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281542497

Uniforms and Perception of Professionalism

Article *in* Journal of Computational and Theoretical Nanoscience · April 2015

DOI: 10.1166/asl.2015.5924

CITATION
1

READS
2,599

3 authors, including:

Lidya Wati Evelina
Binus University
36 PUBLICATIONS **195** CITATIONS
SEE PROFILE

Mia Angeline
Binus University
22 PUBLICATIONS **149** CITATIONS
SEE PROFILE

All content following this page was uploaded by Mia Angeline on 20 November 2020.

The user has requested enhancement of the downloaded file.

Copyright © 2014 American Scientific Publishers
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America

Advanced Science Letters
Vol. 000, 00–00, 2014

Uniforms and Perception of Professionalism

Lidya Wati Evelina[1], Mia Angeline [2], Vini Mariani[3]
[1,2] Marketing Communication Department (Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, 11530, Indonesia), levelina@binus.edu, f.angeline@gmail.com
[3] Information System Department (Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, 11530, Indonesia), vmariani@binus.edu

Abstract: All Corporate identity mix plays an important role in achieving the organizational objectives, which also affects consumer perceptions of organization products and services. One of the dimensions of corporate identity is the visual identity, which includes names, slogans, logos, colors, staff appearance, and others that can be seen visually and as sociated with the organization. This study focused on staff appearance using uniforms in banking industry. Uniforms show a critical image to guests, customers, other departments and the general public. The selected bank is one of private bank in cooperation with Binus University. Research objectives are (1) to determine attributes that describe professionalism in banking industry; (2) Binusian's perception of professionalism through uniforms worn by banking staff. This study used quantitative method with convenience sampling of Binusian (including students, lecturers, and staffs). Results of this study is respondentshave the perception of professional bank employee in the term of service but do not necessarily have the integrity and good business ethics. The color preference which reflect professionalism is blue, while the selected bank uses yellow as one of primary color in front office's uniforms.

Keywords: corporate identity, professionalism,uniforms.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of corporate identity and its role in the organization has developed into an interesting research area, although more researches were focused in the field of graphic design and health care industries. Mdletye, Coetzee, & Ukpere stated that corporate identity indicates people's view of the organisation in relation to the external organisational environment [7]. It is concerned with the external image that the organization portrays in terms of marketing through branding and messages. According to [10] corporate identity mix plays an important role in achieving the organizational objectives. In addition, the corporate identity mix also affects consumer perceptions of organization products and services.

The management of corporate identity in the banking sector is important due to times of financial crisis, since banks and saving banks are facing problems associated with a lack of credibility and trust towards them. It is necessary to recover stakeholder confidence by having a positive image that is consistent with the organization's culture [3]. One of the dimensions of corporate identity is the visual identity, which includes names, slogans, logos, colors, staff appearance, and others that can be seen visually and associated with the organization [10]. Visual identity also known as corporate symbol. In this study, the components that will be emphasized is the corporate symbol, the uniforms worn by front office employees, and how consumers' perceptions of the uniform.

Similar studies are often found in the field of health care, namely the effect of nurse uniforms on perceptions of professionalism in the eyes of patients and visitors. According to [15], uniforms worn by nurses are powerful symbol of professionalism. According to research from [12], white nurse uniforms hows attributes confidence, reliability, competence, and professionalism.While uniform tops that have a small print designs hows attributes caring, attentiveness, cooperation, and approachable.

However, research on corporate symbol is not widely practiced within the company, including the banking industry. Today many savings banks that are under going the process of reorganization, including mergers and acquisitions, so many new emerging banking brand identity unknown to stakeholders. In addition, the corporate identity of a company is also seen as an important criterion for merger decisions [3].

Thus the importance of corporate identity in banking

 0000-0000/2014/0/0000/000 doi:00.0000/asl.2014.0000

industry and the scarcity of studies are the main reasons for current research. This study aims to examine Binusian's perception of professionalism on uniforms worn by front office staffs. Article is focused on the research objectives as follows:

1. To determine attributes that describe professionalism in banking industry.
2. Binusian's perception of professionalism through uniforms worn by banking staff.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate Identity and Visual Identity

There are several definitions of corporate identity, one of which according to the Melewar corporate identity refers to "what the company is or expects to be", "what the company does", or "what the company represents in society" [3]. Understanding corporate identity has been more closely with the world of graphic design, including logo, color selection, and others, because these thing scan be seenand easier tolearn. Another definition from [3] corporate identity exceeds visual identity of the organization, and includes factors such as the company's internal culture and characteristics of companies that generate relationships and routines performed by employees of the organisation. Broader than that, corporate identity also include external factors, namely the projection of identity, or how the corporate identity is communicated to external stakeholders.

According to [10], corporate identity mix consists of four elements as follows, (1) behavior of organization members, which make it possible for the stakeholders to judge the corporate performances; (2) symbolism including corporate logo, which is an important symbol for introducing the organization; (3) relationships that can transfer corporate messages towards their stakeholders (4) corporate characteristics, which means the corporate understanding of its own.

While according to several studies, corporate identity has six dimensions namely, (1) visual identity, including visual identity system and aesthetics; (2) communication, including internal and external communication; (3) behavior, including corporate, staff, and management behavior; (4) culture, including corporate culture and subcultures; (5) strategy, including portfolio strategies, segmentation and positioning; (6) structure, including organizational structure and brand structure [3].

Study of visual cues or visual semiotics is defined as a sign which is constructed with a visual marker that can be seen as a uniform [4]. Fashion, clothing, makeup and jewelry are seen as a communicative function [3].

This study focused on the first dimension, visual identity or corporate symbol represents the set of visual elements through which the public is able to recognize the company and distinguish it from others. According to Melewar, the main elements that shape the visual identity system are name, slogan, logo, typography and color, which are often included in promotional campaigns [3]. Furthermore, visual identity also consists of the aesthetics of the organisation including architecture, office design, staff appearance, etc.

Visual identity has become one of the key messages that organisation will have to get across to the stakeholder. Reference [12] defined four potential objectives of visual identity, which are (1) visual identity will allow organisations to obtain visibility and recognition in the market; (2) a symbol for stakeholders that will positively influence image and corporate reputation; (3) visual identity projects the organisation's structure externally in an integrated way; and (4) visual identity has an internal function in terms of leading employees to identify themselves with the company.

*email address of author to whom correspondence should be addressed

Uniforms and Professionalism

Costumes are seen as having a communicative function. Costumes, clothing, costume and makeup is a form of artifactual communication [6]. Based on the discussion above, one of the components of the visual identity is the staff appearance including how to wear the uniform. Uniforms convey a critical image to guests, customers, other departments and the general public. An employee's look is a key component of an organization's ability to forge a bond with its customer base and cultivate a strong brand identity in the customer's mind that equates great products or services [5].

In communications, the message was given different meanings by different people while words do not have meaning. Reference [11] stated that process of meaning through the following steps (1) Sensation, which mean sex perience related to the senses, it does not require decomposition of verbal, symbolic, orconceptual; (2) Perception, namely the experience of objects, events, or relationships obtained by inferring information and interpret the message; (3) Memory, which is the process of recording, storage, and memory recalling; (4) Think, is a stage in the under standing of reality that is used to draw conclusions or solutions to problems.

Some of the benefits gained by providing uniforms to employees as follows (1) enhances company professionalism; (2) encourages equality; (3) represents team spirit; (4) helps employees stand out; (5) saves employees money; and (6) free advertising [1]. Uniforms help to establish a good impression about the organization; it represents the culture of a company and its professionalism. It offers the added benefit of allowing employees to stand out from competitors, exhibiting proficient business ethics and develop a sense of trust [1]. Furthermore, it also ensures that employees conduct them selves in a conservative and appropriate manner.

Unfavorable research carried out regarding the influence of nurses uniforms on perceptions of professionalism, resulting in the preferences of patients and visitors to the nurse's uniforms are not related to their perceptions of nurse professionalism [15].

Each company has its ownvalues, as well as the banking industry. The value of professionalism in this study adapted to one of the private banks that cooperate with Binus University. Professionalism values taken to illustrate the professionalism in this study were (1) Customer Focus, namely to understand, explore, and meet customer needs in the best way; (2) Integrity, the customers have a trusted bank, where trust is built through actions that reflect integrity and high business ethics; (3) Teamwork, team is a set of people who have a distinctive affinity, commitment, and synergy procedures to achieve the goal; (4) Pursuit of Excellence, which is always doing the best with the best quality and best process (source: Tata Kelola Bank 2014).

3. METHODS

This study used quantitative method with convenience sampling of Binusian (including students, lecturers, and staffs).

The research methodology selected was chosen to overcome limitations and broaden the understanding of banking uniform, color, and style. Participants viewed photographs of the same front office's uniform in three different colors (light blue, dark blue and yellow) and rated the picture using the selected bank corporate values. This uniform is the original uniforms used by the front office staff of aprivate bankin cooperation with Binus University and was selected in this research.

A total of 300 questionnaires distributed to Binusian who are customers of the selected bank, and only 288 questionnaires were elligible in further calculations, the rest was considered not feasible because there were statements that were not filled. Selection of respondents wear non-probability sampling techniques, namely convenience sampling, types of sampling was selected with areas on for urgent research.

Data analysis for demographic characteristics were summarized by frequency and percentage. Color preference were summarized by frequency and percentage. Professionalism score were summarized by median ranges. After the quantitave analysis were done, triangulation by method were conducted by interview with a member of Binusian with an extensive experience as a professional image consultant for companies.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From two-hundred and eighty-eight respondents, mean gender was male 46% and female 54%. Years of respondent as customer, 23% stated under 3 years and 77% stated over 3 years. The term three years were selected because it was viewed as a suitable amount of time for customers to get to know a company and really feel their services.

Table 1 Respondent Characteristics

Parameter	Level	n (%)
Gender	Male %	133 (46%)
	Female %	155 (54%)
Years as customer	Under 3 years %	67 (23%)
	Over 3 years %	221 (77%)
Colors preference described as professional	Dark blue %	120 (42%)
	Light blue %	82 (28%)
	Yellow %	16 (6%)
	Others %	70 (24%)

Respondents were shown a photograph of front office employee's uniforms without the bank attributes (only models and colors only), then asked to fill out their perceptions whether the uniformed employees bring professional values. The results of the questionnaire can be seen below.

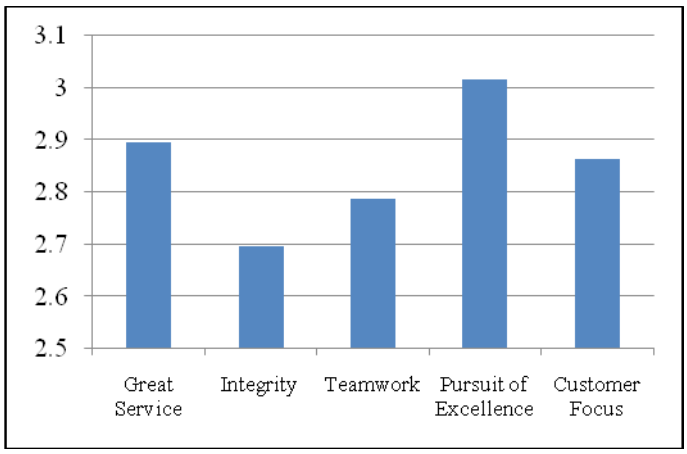

Figure 1. Perception of Professionalism Value in Front Office's Uniform

Biggest result is with the value of the pursuit of excellence, which is always doing the best with the best methods and quality. It can be concluded, when looking at the front office staffs who wear the uniform, appropriate image that is perceived by Binusian is that the staff will search for the best way to help them and improve their quality of service. This is consistent with the results of the second highest value of great service, where the perception of the respondent is employee will provide good service to them. Lowest value is integrity, which is the front office staff that reflects the bank that has integrity and high business ethics. Of uniform used, respondents have the perception of professional bank employee in the term of service but do not necessarily have the integrity and good business ethics.

In addition, respondents were also asked to fill in the perception of color that describe professionalism, given four options which three are options in accordance with the uniform color of selected bank and one other color options beyond the three colors. Color that gets the highest percentage is dark blue with 42% and light blue with 28%. The dark blue color is the corporate identity color of the bank selected in this study, so it is natural if the respondents associate the color with the value of professionalism. The concern is that the bank now uses yellow as a uniform color of their front office staffs, while the respondent's perception of the professionalism of the employees who wear yellow are very low.

Having analyzed the quantitative data, triangulation by method was done with an interview to one of the Binusian. Interviews were conducted with Dr. Ulani Yunus as Chairman of the Department of Marketing Communication at Binus University and had extensive experiences as a consultant in the field of professional image of several organizations. The results of the interview stated the uniform is the identity of a company, every employee who uses a uniform should keep their attitude. In addition, the uniform also has a function to communicate the brand image of a company. In some companies each employee required to wear a uniform because it is a message from the organization to its audiences. Attributes of the company to make it look professional include:

1. Color, which has a different meaning, such as (a) white is endearing, (b) blue is professional, (c) brown is tenacious, (d) yellow is splendor, intelligence, dynamic, etc. The results of this interview in accordance with the quantitative data, where respondents answer that the color blue symbolizes professionalism as much as70%.

2. Composition of company's uniform attributes, logo and company name should be placed on the left chest and the name of the employee in the right chest. If necessary to give a greeting then employee should put their right hand toward the left chest to show the company is willing to help. The reason for using the right hand is because to eastern culture it is considered clean.
3. Accessories, every employee should use accessories not more than thirteen items. Accessories used must not interfere with the activities of employees in serving customers. Accessories may include glasses, earrings, necklaces, hair accessories, and more.
4. Uniform, which is should not be too tigh tor too loose, should be fit according to the body size and comfortable to wear. For customer service or front office at the bank should use a skirt, it shows a trust worthy company to holds customer funds.
5. Hairdo, where the hair should be tied up neatly so as not to inter fere with the activity in serving the customer.
6. Make up, which used according to the standard and there should be special training, preferably for front office employees to have beauty allowance.

Appearance is a way to shape social perceptions and related cultural. Semantics rely on signs and symbols of fashion, namely the line, color, form and shape by finding analogical elements [14].

5. CONCLUSION

The bank which were the focus in this study has communicated its company culture to all employees through new employee induction program, internal monthly magazine, screen-savers, internal training, hand books, games, and many more. So that every employee should have a good understanding of the meaning of uniform as visual identity for the company. Uniforms should only be used during working hours, because an employee represents the company and each employee is deemed appropriate to that uniform they wore. In addition, banks also have to consider the uniform design symbolizing the value of integrity in order to demonstrate trust to the public eye. Good uniform should be able to bring the professionalism of the company.

REFERENCES

[1] Amrod Corporation. (2014, April 9). *The Top 6 Reasons to Empower Employees with Corporate Wear Uniforms*. Retrieved July 2, 2014, from Amrod Corporate Gifts & Clothing: http://www.amrod.co.za/blog/the-6-top reasons-to-empower-your-employees-with-corporate-wear-uniforms/

[2] Barnard, Malcom. (2009, May). Fashion sebagai Komunikasi. Cara Mengkomunikasikan Identitas sosial, Seksual, Kelas dan Gender.Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.

[3] Bravo, R., Pina, J. M., & Matute, J. (2012). Communicating Spanish Banks' Identities: The Role of Websites. *Online Information Review* , 675-697.

[4] Danesi Marcel. Pesan, Tanda, dan Makna. (2010, February). Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.

[5] Hobson, D. (2006, December). *There Are Good Reasons for a Uniform Strategy.* Retrieved June 30, 2014, from Food Management: www.food-management.com

[6] Ibrahim, Idi Subandy. (2007, December) Budaya Populer Sebagai Komunikasi. Dinamika Poscape dan Media scape di Indonesia Kontemporer. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.

[7] Mdletye, M. A., Coetzee, J., & Ukpere, W. I. (2014). Organisational Identity: Another Key Consideration for Facilitating Effective and Efficient

[8] Transformational Change - Lessons from the South African Department of Correctional Services. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* , 190-203.

[9] Moeljono, D. (2005). *Cultured! Budaya Organisasi Dalam Tantangan.* Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo.

[10] Pishdar, M., Toloun, M. R., Farzianpour, F., & Rezaeiasl, M. (2014). Modeling The Effectiveness Of The Corporate Identity Mix In Perceived Quality And Customer Related Brand Equity With Interpretive Structural Equations And MicMac Analysis. *American Journal of Applied Sciences* , 548-557

[11] Rakhmat, J. (2007). *Psikologi Komunikasi.* Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.

[12] Skorupski, V.J., & Rea, R.E. (2006) Patients' Perceptions of Today's Nursing Attire. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 36(9), 393-401.

[13] Van den Bosch, A. L., Elving, W. J., & de Jong, M. D. (2006). The Impact of Organisational Characteristics on Corporate Visual Identity. *European Journal of Marketing* , 870-885.

[14] Vihma, Susann & Seppo Vakeva. (2009, June). Semiotika Visual dan Semantika Produk. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.

[15] Wocial, L., Albert, N. M., Fettes, S., Birch, S., Howey, K., Jie, N., et al. (2010). Impact of Pediatric Nurses' Uniforms On Perceptions Of Nurse Professionalism. *Pediatric Nursing* , 320-326.

Received: 10 July 2014. Accepted: 10 August 2014

View publication stats